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AMERICAN PRONUNCIATION AGAIN.¹

THE fourth circular of the Phonetic Section of the MOD. LANG. ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA called out a larger number of responses than any of the others; moreover, as most of the questions were comparatively easy, it is probable that the replies (which almost invariably show great care and intelligence) are even more trustworthy than the ones previously recorded. I wish to express here my gratitude to all my correspondents, and especially to those who distributed copies of the document among their friends.

Returns have come in from England and Canada, from Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, North Dakota, and Texas, and from all the States east of the Mississippi, except Delaware and Georgia. The answers number one hundred and ninety-two: two from England, five from Canada, sixty-three from New England, twenty-six from the Middle States, seventeen from Ohio, thirty-three from other Northern and Western States, twenty-one from the Virginias, twenty-one from the rest of the South, and four representing no region in particular. I have examined the results very minutely, and have tried to tabulate them in such a way as to bring out all their significance. Some of the facts thus ascertained will be stated in this article, but the important subjects of the *a-æ* words (such as 'half,' 'pass') and the *o-o* series ('dog,' 'off,' etc.) I shall reserve for separate treatment.

I must call attention once more to the fact that the Phonetic Section has, in general, limited its field of observation to the usual speech of educated native Americans—the pronunciation that our teachers, doctors, clergymen, lawyers use (or think they use) in their ordinary conversation. It is doubtless somewhat harder to trace geographical divisions for such a highly artificial language than for the vulgar dialects; but even the latter are hopelessly mixed and interwoven. In fact, so far as I know, there is no such thing as a homogeneous dialect or an unconsciously formed pronunciation. The child constructs his speech by conscious or half-conscious

study, imitation, and self-correction; he takes one word from a parent, another from a play-mate, another from a stranger, sometimes leaving new acquisitions in their original shape, and sometimes bringing them into harmony with similar words in his own store; later he borrows by wholesale from books, and often remodels whole series of words under the influence of school. Even when he is grown, his pronunciation remains in a plastic state, and is easily moulded by contact with a new environment. All this is true of the poor as well as of the rich. The speech of the scholar is unlike that of the laborer, because of the different nature and the greater diversity of the materials from which it is built; but both dialects are composite, inconsistent, unstable; and either one is (it seems to me) an object of scientific interest and a proper subject for investigation. Whatever be the quality of the speech we are examining, we must not expect distinct geographical boundaries: the most we can do is to establish, roughly, for the different parts of the country, the relations which certain conflicting types of pronunciation bear to each other in the class of society we are observing.

I shall now examine the points covered by questions i., ii., iii., iv., and v. in the above-mentioned circular. The phonetic alphabet I shall use is that of the American Dialect Society:—

<i>a</i> ='a' in 'father,'	<i>ɔ</i> ='a' in 'soda,'
<i>æ</i> ='a' in 'hat,'	<i>i</i> ='i' in 'hit,'
<i>e</i> ='e' in 'pet,'	<i>i</i> ='ea' in 'heat,'
<i>ê</i> ='a' in 'hate,'	<i>o</i> ='o' in 'hot,'
<i>ê</i> ='u' in 'hurt,'	<i>ɔ</i> ='au' in 'haul.'

I shall give the name "eastern New England" (E. N. E.) to the part of the United States east of the Connecticut River; "western New England" (W. N. E.) will comprise Vermont, western Massachusetts, and most of Connecticut; my "Middle States" are New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland; my "North" includes W. N. E., the Middle States, Ontario, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois; the "South" consists of Texas and Louisiana and all the region east of the Mississippi and South of the Ohio and Potomac Rivers; my "West" includes the rest of the United States, as far as it is represented in my answers.

¹ See MOD. LANG. NOTES, vi., 2 and 8 (pp. 82-87 and 458-467).

I. TYPES OF R.

The inhabitants of fully two-thirds of our country are generally inclined to pronounce *r* wherever the standard spelling requires it; but in the South and in E. N. E. the natural tendency of most speakers is to sound *r* only before a vowel. In these *r*-less regions, however, the schools have succeeded (to a very limited extent) in resuscitating the *r*, and in E. N. E. the Irish influence is working toward the same end; on the other hand, Anglomaniā, which is rife in some of our Atlantic cities, tends in the opposite direction. It is my belief that the school-master, the spelling-book, and the dictionary, whose authority is well-nigh absolute in sparsely settled and comparatively uncultivated communities, have been largely responsible for the prevalence of *r* in the North and West; and here, too, perhaps, the influence of Irish and Scotch immigration has made itself felt. I hope to be able to return to this subject at some future time.

We can distinguish, in American pronunciation, three varieties of the consonant *r*. The first, which I shall call "normal *r*," is formed by bringing the tip of the tongue near the roots of the teeth, leaving a small, triangular hole, through which the voiced breath issues with a slight buzz: this is the type nearly always chosen by E. N. E. speakers who pronounce an artificial *r*; it is used also by Americans everywhere (so far as I know) for *r* before a vowel. The second variety, a "retracted *r*," seems to be used only at the end of a word or before a consonant, and is therefore confined, in general, to the North and West; it is made by turning the point of the tongue up toward the roof of the mouth, leaving an opening considerably larger than that required for normal *r*. The third type, to which I shall give the name "anticipated *r*," may take the place of number two after *a*, *ē*, *ə*, or *ɔ*, as in 'hard,' 'hurt,' 'paper,' 'horse'; it is formed simultaneously with the preceding vowel, the tip of the tongue being lifted up toward the palate as soon as the *a*, *ē*, *ə*, or *ɔ* begins. This third variety may be divided into two classes, "audible" and "inaudible," according to the extent to which the tongue-point is raised: if the tongue is considerably

lifted (as it generally is in the North and West), the acoustic effect of the combination is that of a somewhat muffled vowel followed by a strong retracted *r*; if, on the other hand, the elevation of the tongue-tip is sufficient to be felt by the speaker, but not marked enough to produce upon the hearer the impression of an *r*, we have the inaudible type, which appears to be very common among cultivated persons in the South.

In words like 'for,' 'horse,' where final 'r' or 'r' plus consonant is preceded by *ɔ*, if the 'r' is not sounded as a consonant, it may be either omitted altogether (*fɔ*, *hɔs*) or pronounced as an *ə* (*fɔə*, *hɔəs*). When the preceding vowel is *a* (as in 'far,' 'hard'), this *ə*-substitute for *r* can scarcely be distinguished from the *a*, unless the word is drawled (*faə*, *haəd*); and after *ē* or *ə* it disappears entirely ('fur'=*fē*, 'hurt'=*hēt*, 'paper'=*pēpə*, 'lettered'=*letəd*). On the other hand, with persons who use anticipated *r*, a final unaccented 'er' often becomes simply a retracted *r*: 'paper'=*pēp-r*.

In the vulgar pronunciation of the South, *r* not before a vowel is almost universally omitted or changed to *ɔ*. This omission or change is perhaps a trifle less general in the uneducated speech of E. N. E. In the North and West the popular dialects retain some form of consonant *r*.

Below will be found the percentages of votes on the treatment of 'r' in the words 'horse,' 'hard,' 'hurt,' 'paper.' The sign *r* designates both the normal and the retracted type; a superposed *r* indicates anticipated *r*.

	HORSE. <i>r</i>				HARD. <i>r</i>			
	ɔr	ɔ	ə	ɔ	ar	a	aə	a
E. N. E.	11	14	15	60	7	13	2	78
South	10	40	20	30	12	40	15	33
North	53	41	2	4	53	41	0	6
West	12	82	6	0	6	82	0	12
	HURT. <i>r</i>				PAPER. <i>r</i>			
	ēr	ē	ē		ər	ə	ə	
E. N. E.	11	16	73		3	13		84
South	16	54	30		5	54		41
North	41	53	6		41	53		6
West	12	82	6		15	80		5

It will be seen that E. N. E. is opposed, by an overwhelming majority, to the pronunciation of *r* in these words, and especially in 'paper' and 'hard.' The South has a few advocates of normal *r*, but is in general almost evenly divided between omission or change to *ɜ*, on the one hand, and anticipated *r* (probably the inaudible kind), on the other; my six correspondents in eastern Virginia agree in dropping the *r* from all the words; the Carolinas are almost unanimous for anticipated *r* in 'paper' and 'hurt,' and the Gulf States strongly favor the same type in 'paper.' Anticipated *r* (doubtless the audible variety) predominates for all the words in the West, and also in Illinois, central Ohio, and western and central New York and Pennsylvania; it prevails for 'hurt' and 'paper,' but not for the other words, in northern Ohio and in Michigan. Maryland and Kentucky seem to be on the line between North and South. The pronunciation of *ēr* before a consonant as *ēi* ('hurt'=*hēit*), which is common in New York City, Philadelphia, and some parts of the South, was not called for by my circular.

2. PRONUNCIATION OF 'WH.'

The list given in the circular included eighteen typical cases of 'wh' before 'a,' 'e,' and 'i,' and also the words 'whoa!,' 'why!,' and 'why?.' My correspondents from all parts of the country are nearly unanimous in favor of *hw* in all the examples except 'wharf,' 'whoa,' and the interjection 'why.' Several gentlemen, however, tell me that in many of the cases their treatment of the 'wh' varies according to the stress. Two Bostonians have voiceless *w* in all the words; and four correspondents (from New York City, New Jersey, southern Pennsylvania, and central Ohio) have voiced *w* in all. I am told that this latter sound is very common among cultivated speakers in Salem, Mass. Formerly, no doubt, it was in general use in N. E. From Maine, Philadelphia, northern Ohio, Indiana, North Dakota, western Tennessee, and Louisiana come a few scattering votes for some kind of *w*, without *h*, in 'what,' 'whatever,' 'when,' 'whenever,' 'wherever,' 'whether,' 'which'—words in which the syllable containing 'wh' is very often unaccented. 'Whale' with voiced

w is reported from eastern Massachusetts; 'wheel,' 'whirl,' 'whit,' 'white,' with the same sound, from southern Ohio; 'whip,' 'white,' 'why?,' with the same initial consonant, from western Tennessee; and 'wheel,' 'whistle,' 'whit,' with voiceless *w*, from Indiana.

The percentages for the three exceptional words, 'wharf,' 'whoa!,' 'why!,' are given below. The symbol *w* denotes a voiced, and *w* a voiceless *w*.

	WHARF.			WHOA!			WHY!		
	hw	u	w	hw	u	w	hw	u	w
E. N. E.	92	4	4	92	4	4	83	6	11
North	73	2	25	75	3	22	53	6	41
West	88	0	12	70	12	18	17	12	71
South	65	2	33	31	7	62	47	5	48

The West and northern Ohio are very strongly in favor of voiced *w* in 'why!.' Virginia and the Carolinas are almost unanimous for the same sound in 'whoa!.' Voiced *w* is said to be the usual Virginian pronunciation of 'wh' in 'wharf.' I have, by the way, evidence that this word was vulgarly called *wɜf* in Boston a hundred years ago.

3. 'ERIE,' 'MARY,' ETC.

Words which, according to the dictionaries, end in *ir* or in *ēr* are really pronounced with a glide, *ɜ*, before or instead of the *r*; the preceding vowel varies between *i* and *ɪ*, *æ* and *e*: 'beer'=*biər*, *biɜ*, *biɜr*, or *biɜ*; 'hair'=*hæər*, *hæɜ*, *hæɜr*, or *hæɜ*. If a syllable beginning with a vowel is added to such a word, the *r* is kept or restored, and the glide is regularly preserved: 'beery'=*biəri* or *biɜri*, 'hairy'=*hæəri* or *hæɜri*. Three Southerners, however, one from the Valley of Virginia and two from North Carolina, tell me that in their dialect the glide is lost in derivatives of words in *-æər*, 'hairy' being pronounced exactly like 'Harry.' Some other speakers, if I am not mistaken, suppress the glide, but lengthen and raise the accented vowel, which then has a sound between *æ* and *e*; this *hæri* is often hard to distinguish from *hæəri*. Moreover, I have reason to believe that many Southerners who substitute *yē* for final *ir* keep this *yē* in derivatives: 'fear'=*fyē*, 'fearing'=*fyērɪn*.

Now, the groups 'er' or 'ear,' 'ar' or 'air' before a vowel occur also in certain words that are not derived from forms in *-iər*, *-æər*: familiar examples are 'Erie,' 'herald,' 'Mary,' 'Marion.' For some of these words the pronunciation is regularly *er*, *ær*: 'heron,' 'very,'=*herən*, *veri*; 'baron,' 'claret'=*bærən*, *klærət*.² The others are exceedingly variable: we may have, on the one hand, *ir*, *ēr*, as in *wiri*, *pērənt* ('weary,' 'parent,') and, on the other hand, *iər* or *ir*, *æər* or *ēr* or *ær*, as in *wiəri* or *wiri*, *pæərənt* or *pērənt* or *pærənt*. The first type is the commoner in America, while the forms *iər* and *æər* or *ēr* are preferred in southern England. A few of my American correspondents have noted the influence of the English habit upon their own practice. The variable words may be divided into two categories, paroxytones and proparoxytones: in examples of the first class ('dreary,' 'fairy') 'er' or 'ear' is *ir* and *iər* and (more rarely) *ir*, 'ar' or 'air' is *ēr* and *ær* and (less frequently) *æər*, and also, in some cases, *ær*; in words of the second class ('period,' 'various') the combinations *iər* and *æər* are very difficult for Americans, and are, I think, always reduced to *ir* and *ær* by speakers who use the glide in paroxytones.³

The general percentages for the 'er' or 'ear' words are as follows:—

	<i>ir</i>	<i>iər</i>		<i>ir</i>	<i>iər</i>
Nero	88	12	material	70	30
zero	88	12	Erie	68	32
hero	87	13	imperious	68	32
chimera	81	19	period	68	32
era	81	19	query	62	38
peri	80	20	aerial	60	40
Erin	79	21	aerie	57	43
series	78	22	O'Leary	40	60
coherent	77	23	weary	40	60
superior	72	28	dreary	35	65
serious	71	29			

It will be noted that the proparoxytones (only

² In America 'Clara' (*klærə*) belongs to this class.

³ In southern England *iər* in these cases tends to become *yər* or *yēr*: 'material'=*matyarial*, 'experience'=*iksɸyari-əns*.

⁴ Also *ir*.

a few samples of which were given) group themselves together, ranging between 72-28 and 60-40; the strongest support for *ir* in these cases comes from the North and West. In New York City and in southern Ohio there seems to be a preference for *iər* or *ir* in nearly all the words. In 'dreary,' 'weary,' and 'O'Leary,' where the spelling 'ear' seems to suggest a glide, *iər* or *ir* prevails everywhere: the distinction between these words and all the others is most marked in the South and in E. N. E.; in the West it is scarcely noticeable. The South has by far the largest proportion of votes for *ir* in all the words except 'aerie' and the three just mentioned: my correspondents in Tennessee, Kentucky, and eastern and western Virginia are unanimous for *ir* in most of the examples; and all the votes from the Carolinas are in favor of *ir* for the entire list.

Here are the general percentages for the examples of 'ar' or 'air.' In the case of proparoxytones only a few typical words were presented.

	<i>ēr</i>	<i>æər</i> or <i>ær</i>	<i>ær</i>
Pharaoh	80	19	1
vagary	78	19	3
vegetarian	77	23	0
Ariel	76	21	3
precarious	76	22	2
Sarah	76	21	3
Mary	75	24	1
vary	74	24	2
Cary	72	24	4
various	72	26	2
harem	69	23	8
eyry	68	31	1
faro	68	21	11
wary	63	33	4
Clary	62	26	12
chary	60	32	8
dairy	60	39	1
caret	57	16	27
prairie	54	44	2
parent	40	37	23
Aaron	35	36	29
garish	33	44	23
fairy	26	61	13
apparent	24	30	46

In this list, as in the other, the proparoxytones cling together: they vary between 77-23-0 and

72-26-2. Here, again, E. N. E. and the South agree in opposing the glide: the pronunciation of these two regions, and particularly that of E. N. E., favors *ēr* in proparoxytones and also in 'harem,' 'Mary,' 'Pharaoh,' 'Sarah,' 'vagary,' 'vary'; E. N. E. has, moreover, a decided preference for *ēr* in 'caret,' 'Cary,' 'faro.' Nearly all the votes for *færō* and very many of those for *kærōt* come from the South, which, furthermore, joins with the rest of the country in preferring *ær* in 'apparent.' 'Aaron' with *ær* is uncommon in the South; it is especially popular in E. N. E. Most of the support for *ær* in the greater part of the examples comes from the Middle States and Ohio, where *ær* is comparatively rare; New York City strongly favors *ær* in nearly all the words. On the other hand, the Carolinas, Kentucky, Tennessee, and eastern and western Virginia send almost no votes for *ær*. It is to be noted that *ær* or *ær* is the general choice in 'fairy,' and has very many advocates in 'garish,' 'prairie,' 'dairy,' 'parent,' and 'Aaron': in 'dairy,' 'fairy,' 'prairie' the sound may be due to the spelling 'ai,' which suggests to the mind something different from the vowel represented by simple 'a'; in 'Aaron,' 'garish,' 'parent' *ær* may be the result of a compromise between *ēr* and *ær*. One correspondent in Indiana pronounces 'Mary' exactly like 'merry'; one in Illinois has *e* in all the words except 'harem'; and one in Ontario has the same vowel in 'Mary,' 'Sarah,' 'vagary,' 'various,' 'vary,' 'vegetarian,' 'wary.'

4. 'HAUNT,' 'LAUNCH,' 'LAUNDRY,' ETC.

The fifth question on my circular related to certain words containing 'au' (in the case of 'stanch' now written 'a') followed by 'nch,' 'nd,' or 'nt.' To my list might have been added 'maunder,' 'Saunders,' 'taunt,' and, perhaps, 'Chauncy.'⁵ It is a noteworthy fact that 'aunt' does not belong to this series. These words show, in addition to the pronunciations *a* and *æ*, which are given to such forms as 'ant' and 'branch,' a third type, *ɔ*, which prevails in a large part of our country. The dialect boundaries are not quite the same for this case as for those we have considered

⁵ I should be glad to receive information about the pronunciation of these words.

hitherto: W. N. E. goes with E. N. E. rather than with the Middle States. The percentages are as follows:—

	N. E.			NORTH, ⁶ WEST			SOUTH		
	ɔ	a	æ	ɔ	a	æ	ɔ	a	æ
craunch	43	57	0	79	18	3	66	24	0
daunt	17	83	0	76	21	3	59	31	10
flaunt	22	78	0	76	21	3	67	26	7
gaunt	14	86	0	72	23	5	54	29	17
gauntlet	11	89	0	71	25	4	52	29	19
haunch	29	71	0	77	20	3	64	29	7
haunt	24	76	0	75	19	6	50	31	19
jaunt	17	83	0	69	25	6	50	31	19
jaundice	29	71	0	73	24	3	61	29	10
launch	14	84	2	64	28	8	52	29	19
laundry	48	52	0	87	13	0	64	26	0
paunch	73	27	0	89	10	1	88	12	0
saunter	33	67	0	86	11	3	55	31	14
stanch	11	89	0	33	43	24	19	21	60
vaunt	29	71	0	58	15	0	71	24	5

Most of the votes for *a* in the North and West come from New York City, northern Ohio, and Michigan; in the West there are very few cases of *a*, except in 'stanch'; in Illinois there are none. No example of *a* has been reported from Tennessee. Nearly all the Southern support of *a* comes from the eastern (and, in a measure, from the central and northern) part of Virginia. I am told on good authority that the old whig families in Virginia say *ɔ*, while the democratic ones pronounce *æ*; the use of *a* is probably due to school influence, which several of my correspondents mention in connection with this list. In the Gulf States the vulgar pronunciation for most of the words is said to be *æ*; this is doubtless true of almost all the South and of a part, at least, of the North and West; *æ* in 'gaunt,' 'gauntlet,' 'haunt,' 'jaundice,' 'launch,' 'stanch' is popular in northern Ohio.

For the sake of convenience I added to the above list, on my circular, the word 'Chicago.' The results are given below:—

	N. E.		NORTH, ⁷ WEST		SOUTH	
	ɔ	a	ɔ	a	ɔ	a
Chicago	75	25	67	33	33	67

The West is more inclined to *a* than the North; *ɔ* is particularly strong in the Middle States.

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⁶ Not including W. N. E.

⁷ Not including W. N. E.